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978-1-108-07453-7 - *An Historiall Expostulation: Against the Beastlye Abusers, Both of Chyrurgerie and Physyke, in Oure Tyme: With a Goodlye Doctrine and Instruction, Necessarye to be Marked and Followed, of all True Chirurgiens*

John Hall Edited by T. J. Pettigrew

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History of Medicine

It is sobering to realise that as recently as the year in which *On the Origin of Species* was published, learned opinion was that diseases such as typhus and cholera were spread by a ‘miasma’, and suggestions that doctors should wash their hands before examining patients were greeted with mockery by the profession. The Cambridge Library Collection reissues milestone publications in the history of Western medicine as well as studies of other medical traditions. Its coverage ranges from Galen on anatomical procedures to Florence Nightingale’s common-sense advice to nurses, and includes early research into genetics and mental health, colonial reports on tropical diseases, documents on public health and military medicine, and publications on spa culture and medicinal plants.

An Historiall Expostulation against the Beastlye Abusers, Both of Chyrurgerie and Physyke, in Oure Tyme

The surgeon Thomas Pettigrew (1791–1865) was interested in all aspects of antiquity. He gained fame in society through his mummy-unwrapping parties, and his *History of Egyptian Mummies* is also reissued in the Cambridge Library Collection. His interest in the early history of medicine is evidenced by this edition of a work by John Hall, which was published by the Percy Society in 1844. Hall was a surgeon, born 1529/30, who published this work in 1565 as an appendix to his translation of the work of the thirteenth-century surgeon Lanfranc of Milan. Little is known about Hall except that he practised medicine in Maidstone, Kent, and had published acrostic verses. He was vociferous in his indignation against fraudulent medicine, and this work describes nine incidents where quacks, both male and female, had visited Maidstone and offered miraculous cures to the gullible: Hall himself was involved in prosecuting some of them.

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www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108074537

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This edition first published 1844

This digitally printed version 2014

ISBN 978-1-108-07453-7 Paperback

This book reproduces the text of the original edition. The content and language reflect the beliefs, practices and terminology of their time, and have not been updated.

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WITH

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OF ALL TRUE CHIRURGIENS :

BY

JOHN HALLE,

CHYRURGYEN.

EDITED BY

T. J. PETTIGREW, ESQ., F.R.S., F.S.A.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND,
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GÜTTINGEN,
ETC. ETC. ETC.

LONDON.

PRINTED FOR THE PERCY SOCIETY,

BY T. RICHARDS, 100, ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

M.DCCC.XLIV.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE following tract is appended to a rare work which forms one of the earliest English books in surgery. It is a translation of Lanfranc's "Chirurgia Parva," by John Hall, surgeon. Of the translator little is known. There are no biographical notices of him beyond those which can be gathered from his writings, and from these we learn that he was a surgeon in practice at Maidstone, in Kent, and a "member of the worshipful Company of Chirurgeons." He addresses his book to the members of that body, for protection, as well as to call upon them to unite with him in his endeavours to put down empiricism, and to advance the knowledge of surgeons in general. He appears to have been a man of strong mind, and of great zeal in his profession. A portrait, (wood cut), of which a facsimile is here given, taken when thirty-five years of age, shows that he was born in 1529 or 1530, and is prefixed to the work.

Following his "Vera Effigies," is, in seven quatrains :—

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THE BOOKES VERDICT.

As some delighte moste to beholde,
 Eche newe devyse and guyse,
 So some in workes of fathers olde,
 Their studies exercise.

Perusing with all diligence
 Bokes written long before :
 Wherin they learne experience,
 To heale both sicke and sore ;

Which I alowe in dede and werde,
 In those that understande ;
 For otherwyse it is a sworde
 Put in a mad mans hande.

Let idiots and betles blynde,
 Therefore lay me aparte :
 Leste contrarie myne author's mynde
 They rudly me perverte.

For as the bee doth honie take
 From every goodly flowre,
 And spyders of the same doe make
 Venim that wyll devoure :

So all that learned men and wyse
 To good purpose can use,
 The rude, that knowledge doe despise,
 Will ever more abuse.

Wherefore all those that use me right
 I shall increase their fame :
 And vyle abusers all my mighte
 Shall be to doe them shame.

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In his address “unto the Worshipful the Maisters, Wardens, and consequently to all the whole Company and Brotherhood of Chirurgiens of London,” he strongly laments the prevalent ignorance of the profession, “and alas,” says he, “where as there is one in Englande, almoste throughout al the realme, that is indede a true minister of this arte, there are tenne abhominable abusers of the same. Where as there is one chirurgien that was apprentice to his arte, or one physicien that hath travayled in the true studie and exercise of phisique, there are tenne that are presumptuous swearers, smatterers, or abusers of the same; yea, smythes, cutlers, carters, coblars, copers, coriars of lether, carpenters, and a great rable of women.” He afterwards says, “I would to God, therefore, my dere maisters and brethren, that there might no fault be found in us concerning these thinges; for truly if we weare such men of science as we ought to be, these false abusers would be more fearful to medle as they doe.” He contrasts the conduct and information of the professors of other arts and sciences, with those of surgery, and he demonstrates the necessity of drawing attention to the works of the learned and experienced, to improve their condition. With this view he undertook the translation of Lanfranc’s work.

LANFRANC was a physician, born at Milan, and

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flourished in the thirteenth century. He was a pupil of Gulielmus de Saliceto, and having completed his studies, he went into France and settled at Lyons, whence he was, by his great reputation, called to Paris, where he taught his profession with great *éclat*. His work is intitled “Ars Chirurgica,” the MS. of which is in the Bibliothèque du Roi de France. It gives a miserable picture of the state of surgery in France in his time, and was first published at Venice, in 1490, and again in 1519, and 1546. It was also printed at Lyons, in 1553, together with the works of Guy de Chauliac, Roger, &c., and it was translated into German by Otho Brunfels, and published at Frankfort in 1566. Altogether it is of little importance, and relates to the “treating of woundes, of aposthemes, of ulcers, (the cancer and the fistula), of algebra or restoration, (dislocations and fractures), and of the diseases of the eyes.” Then ensues “The Antidotarie,” or account of remedies employed, which concludes “Lanfranc’s Briefe.” Halle says that it was translated “out of Frenshe, into the olde Saxony English, about two hundred years past.”

John Halle is bold in his expressions against the quacks of his day, a most determined enemy to ignorant empirics, exulting in the exposure of their nefarious practices, their urinoscopical

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examinations, &c., and loud in his protestations against the combination of magic, divination, and physic. In one place he says, "I will not cease while breath is in my body, to lay on with both handes till this battell be wonne, and our adversaries convinced and vanquished; which, although, as I saide afore, they are tenne to one, yet truthe being our weapon, and good science our armour, with our generall the high author of them, we nede not to doubt but that one shal be good enough for a thousand, not so strongly armed, but naked men, and bare of all knowledge." He seems, however, to have had some misgivings as to the publication of the "Historiall Expostulation," as a letter from Dr. William Cuninghame, a reader of lectures at Surgeons' Hall, and dated from his house in Colman Street, April 18th, 1565, is affixed in recommendation of the undertaking, and advises him not to withhold his condemnation of the "rabble of ronnagates." This is succeeded by another letter, from the pen of Thomas Gale, a "maister in chirurgerye," approving his work, and urging its publication in the following manner: "Aspire, therefore, and take breth unto you; let no wayne and frivolous opinion overcome you, for I see no cause wherfore you shoulde exerce your selfe. Every wyse man wyll accepte your indevours, excepte those whiche neyther mynde their office,

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neither the utilitie of the publique wealth ; every good man will embrace, and with great gladnes revolve over your boke as sone as it is published, and wil, at the first sight of your good travell, have you in more estimacion then ever they had. And why ? because you set forth the most famous and excellent arte of medicine.”

Some lines addressed to the “loving readers,” precede John Halle’s own epistle to the reader, in which occur many good observations, and in which the character of the man is well displayed. He lays on most lustily against the empirics, and ignorant surgions, the “very caterpyliers to the publique orders.” He accuses them of running about the country, “like pedlars, tynkers, ratte katchers, and very vacaboundes, some only to set bones, some to drawe tethe, some to let blood, some to cutte ruptures, and take out stones ; but all thys rather (under suche colour), to mayntayne an idle and thevyshe lyfe, then to profyte the common weale, to the great uprobrie of all the whole profession of medicine.” He then laments that less attention is paid to the making of good surgeons, than of other artificers. “Alas, there are goodly orders taken, and profitable lawes made, for makyng of clothe, tannyng of leather, makyng of shoes, and many other externall thynges, the abuse wherof is but a dearth or disprofite of

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the purse ; and shall there not be a redresse had for the true use of a science whereupon dependeth the health of mans body? without whiche what is mans lyfe but a very misery or wretched werines? the abuse of whiche science is not only a disprofite to the purse, but a farre greater charge, that is to saye, the losse of helth and lyfe.” He descants upon the neglect shown to apprentices taken by many, as he says, “ not for to teache them science, but only to be their drudge, and to doe their toyle and labore, which is the cause, that so many come out of their yeares so ignorant. For their intent is to have servantes to dooe the toyle in their house, and not to make them cunning men ; yea, and some will refuse a yonge man that is learned, and apte to understande, to have an ignorant slave, to beare the water tankard, and scoure pannes ; suche a one, (as the common proverbe is), that will never doe man of science harme, unles he steale away his dynner.”

The necessary consequence of this conduct is thus pointed out ; “ And yet will suche a one bragge and boaste, at seven years ende, as though he had all the learnyng and cunningg under the sunne, although in very dede, the moste knowledge that he hath is, to poule, or shave, drawe a toothe, or dresse a broken pate. Alas, is not this a great pytye, that suche a noble arte shall thus

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be abused every way, through the filthie lucre and avaricious myndes of men? Is it not a shame to use such roberie? Doe ye not steale lyke robbers the service of your apprentyses, when contrary to your covenants, ye hyde your science from your servantes, to whom ye are bounde to teache it; and yet, (in the meane season), receive the labor of their bodyes more lyke slaves then men; beside the great dishonor that therby you doe to your own profession, God graunt that I may see this amended, as I trust I shall.”

Halle objects to the division of medical science, shows the dependence of the severall departments upon each other, by reference to the opinions of ancient authors; asserts that by “pernicious division all hath been brought to confusion, so that neither parte is nowe used only of the experte professors therof, but rather of every smearer, that listeth to abuse them. For as the physicians thynke their learnyng sufficient, without practyse or experience, so the chirurgien, for the moste parte, havyng experience and practyse, thinketh it unnedeful to have any learnyng at all, which also hath boldened every ignorant rusticall, ye and foolyshe women, to think them selves sufficient to profess and worke in so noble and worthy an arte.” He then states what a surgeon should be: learned, expert, of good discretion, &c.

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and having established these points, he asks, “ Why is every rude, rusticke, braynsicke beast, fond foole, indiscrete idiote; yea every bedlem baude, and scoldinge drabbe, suffered thus (without all order) to abuse this worthy arte upon the body of man? What avayleth the goodly orders, taken by our forefathers and ancient authores, that none should be admitted to the arte of chirurgery, that are miscreate or deformed of body; as goggle or skwynte eyed, unperfecte of sight, unhelthy of body, unperfecte of mynde, not hole in his members, boystrous fingers or shakyng handes. But contrary-wyse, that all that should be admytted to that arte, should be of cleare and perfect sight, well formed in person, hole of mynde and of members, sclender and tender fingered, havng a softe and stedfast hande: or as the common sentence is, a chirurgien should have three dyvers properties in his person. That is to saie, a harte as the harte of a lyon, his eyes like the eyes of an hawke, and his handes as the handes of a woman: what avayleth this order I saye, sithe the contrary in all poyntes is put dayly in use, and that almost without hope of redresse? seyng also, that those auncient authors had not only this regarde to the forme of the body, but also, and as well to the bewtie or ornament of the mynde, and honest conversation of him that should

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be admitted to chirurgery, as are thes: He ought to be well manered, of good audacitie, and bolde where he may worke surely; and, contrariwise, doubtfull, and fearfull, in things that be dangerous and desperate. He must be gentyll to his pacients, witty in prognostications, and forseynge of dangers, apte and reasonable to answeere and dissolve all doubttes and questions belongynge to his worke. He muste also be chaste, sober, meeke, and merci-full; no extorcioner, but so to accomlishe his rewarde, at the handes of the ryche, to maynteine his science and necessary lyvynges, that he may helpe the poore for the only sake of God: what meaneth it, I saye, (those things considered) that so many sheepe heades, unwytty, unlearned, unchaste, ribaudes, lecheours, fornicators; dronkardes, belygoddes, beastly gluttons, wrathfull, envious and evell manered, shall thus myserably be suffred to abuse so noble an arte; yea, that they shall also be mayntayned (in despyght of those that are men of science indede) proffered lyvynges for that profession, contrary to the ordinances and lawes of a citie, beyng a carpenter, a cobbler, or a corier of lether, or whatsoever he be: the wyttye, the learned, the man of knowledge, the citizen, and the free man, in the meane season wantyng preferrement and lyvyng?"

He professes much anxiety for the success of

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his observations, and trusts that if his book, being read by any abuser of chirurgery, he should find himself “rubbed on the galle,” he will leave his vice and improve. He also admonishes the young to study, to attend to their anatomy, to the nature and complexions of their patients, and the properties of their medicines; to let their practise be founded on their reason, and that “none may worke without knowledge joyned to experience.” Finally, he warns the young man entering the profession, to avoid “games and spendyng the time in playe. And hereof assure thy selfe, that if thou have not as great desyre to thy boke, as the greatest gamner hath to his game, thou shalte never worthily be called cunnyng in this arte. For thou must thynke and esteme all tyme of leysure from thy worke and busynes, even loste and evill bestowed, in which thou hast not profyted somewhat at thy boke. Let thy boke therefore, I say, be thy pastyme and game: which (if thou love it as thou oughtest) will so delight thee, that thou shalt thinke no tyme so well bestowed as at it. Yea, thou must desyre it as the child doeth his mother’s pappe; and so will it nourishe thee, that thou shalt worthily growe and increase to a worshypfull fame of cunnyng and learnyng.” To the work of Lanfranc, Halle has added an expositive table of the “strange wordes, names,

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diseases, symples, &c. which occur in the book; ‘A very frutefull and necessary briefe worke of Anatomie,’ and the “Historiall Expostulation,” herewith reprinted. To the first of these is affixed the following acrostic:—

NOMEN AUTHORIS SUB HIS ATRACTILIS JACET.

If reason maye the justice be
Of this my minde the truthe to trye:
Howe can ther be dispaire in me
No truthe sithe reason can denye.

Happye it is when men esteme:
All one in truthe, the same to tell:
Let no man voyde of reason deme,
Lest he agaynste the truthe rebell.

The proheme contains a very creditable defence of the ancients and their modes of study, and concludes with some quaint lines which terminate thus:—

In wicked men, so wickednes
Will alway have alway:
Dispraising still, throughe hatefulnessse,
Eche good and perfect way.

Thomas Halle, the brother of the author, then addresses the “Gentle Readers that thirst for science,” and adds several stanzas in praise of the intent of the work, and also some lines which bear

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the signature of “Ihon Yates, Chirurgion.” In the table, under the head of Algebra, is said: “This Araby worde *Algebra* sygnifyeth as well fractures, as of bones, &c. as somtyme the restauratyon of the same.” Of Scabiosa “Men saye that S. Urban at the petitions of a certaine asthmaticke sister of his, (that used scabiosa continually) sente to hir these verses, of the vertues therof:—

URBANUS SUO SENESCIT PRETIUM SCABIOSÆ.

Non purgat pectus quod comprimit ægra senectus ;
Lenit pulmonem, purgat laterum regionem ;
Apostema frangit, si locum bibita tangit :
Tribus uncta foris anthracem liberat horis.

To Urbane him selfe, it is uncertaine
Howe many vertues in scabiose reygne :
But excellently it clenseth the breste
Of sicke aged folke, that there are opreste.

The pypes of the lunges, if rough they apere,
It maketh them smothe, yea gentle and clere ;
The roumes of the breste, that we the sydes call,
It purgeth well, from incumbrances all.

If it be drunke, so that it touche the place,
Apostemes it breakes, by peculiar grace ;
Without to carbuncles if it layde be,
It doth lose and breake them within howres three.”

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At the end of the table are these verses :—

Though envie me accuse,
 In suche as wyll disdayne ;
 It can not make me muse,
 Nor nothyng rere my brayne.

For they that doe misuse
 Their tongues in suche a case,
 Wyll styll them selves abuse,
 In runnyng of that rase.

But reason is myne ayde
 To take my cause in hande :
 And I nothyng afrayde
 With hir in place to stande.

Havyng my hope so stayde,
 That those who lyste to rayle
 Wyllbe ryght sore dismayde,
 When reason shall prevayle.

For truthe, by reason strong,
 Wyll have the upper hande ;
 When envie vyle and wronge,
 Shall fayntly flee the lande.

And truthe hath always been,
 A daughter unto tyme ;
 Whiche as it hath been seen,
 Detecteth every cryme.

The “Treatise of Anatomie” forms the principal work of our author. He quotes from a writer, Henricus de Ermunda Villa, who compareth

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“the chirurgien ignorant in anatomy, to a blynde man whiche woude hewe a pece of tymber; for as a blynd man that heweth on a logge knoweth not how muche he should hewe therof, nor in what maner, (and therefore commonly erreth in hewyng more or lesse than he ought to doe :) so lyke wyse doth the chyrurgien that worketh on the body of man, not knowing the anatomy.” The frame of man, he tells us, has been called by the Greeks “Microcosmos, a little world, because in the same (even as in the frame of the greate worlde) so manye wonders maye bee seene of natures works to the hygh honor and glorye of Almyghtye God. Maye it not be proved, that the brayne (lyke unto the heavens) hangeth without any maner of staye or proppe, to holde by the same? nay, it is so evident, that every learned anatomiste writeth of the same, as a thyng not to be doubted of, and therefore judge the same to have a certeyne lykenes with the heavenly nature. And as the world hath two notable lyghtes to governe the same, namely, the sonne and the moone; so hath the body of man, planted lykewyse in the hyghest place, twoo lyghtes, called eyes, whiche are the lyghtes of the body, as the sonne and the moone are the lyghtes of the world. And it is also wyrtten of some doctors, that the brayne hath vii concavites, being instrumentes of the wyttes,

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which answer unto the vii spheres of the planetes. And to be briefe, it is a worlde to beholde, and a wonderful wonder to thynke, that as great merveyles may bee seene, wrought by God in nature in this little worlde, man his body, as ther is to be considered in any thyng in the unyversall great worlde, above or benethe at any tyme.

“Secondly, it is called a common weale, for as muche as there is therin conteyned as it were a ryghteous regiment, betwene a prynce and his subjectes, as for example. Let us call the harte of man a king, the brayne and the lyver the chiefe governours under hym, the stomache and the guttes, with other aperteinyng to nutryments, the officers of his courte, and all the members universally his subjectes. And then let us see, if any man can devyse any necessary instrument of a common weale, nedefull for the wealth of the same, from the hyghest to the lowest, that the lyke shall not be founde in the body of man, as it is so well knowne to all those that travel in the knowledge of anatomie, that I nede not here muche therof to wryte. Can it be perceyved that the hande or the fote, or any part of them or such lyke (which we may lyken to the labourers, or as some call them vyle members of a common weale) at any tyme to resiste or rebel againste the harte their soveraigne lord, or any other officer under

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hym their superiors? No, truly. The body of man is a common weale without rebellion: the kyng so lovyng his subjectes, and the subjectes so lovyng their kyng, that the one is ever redy to mynister unto the other all thynges nedeful; as if the harte by any occasion susteyne damage, as we may see in the disease called *Sincope*, or swoundyng. At suche a tyme I saye the face, the handes, and the fete, are founde colde and without felynge, strengthe or lyfe; and what proveth it, but that as lovyng and obedient subjectes they thynke nothyng theyr own wherof the harte hath nede, which is their lorde and governour; yea, they utterly depryve themselves of altogether to serve and please their lord. Immediately as the swoundyng ceaseth, the bloude resorteth to the face, the handes and the feete are warme agayne, as it were benefittes done, rendered agayne with thankes and joye. And is not such a lorde and kyng worthy of good subjectes, that for the helpe of one of the leaste of them wyl spend all that he hath, so long as lyfe endureth? as if a member be hurte, wherby any veyne or artery is cutte, the bloude or spirit will issue in suche wyse that it wyll not cease comyng thither so longe as any is lefte, if it be not in tyme prevented. Oh kynd and gentyll governour, oh wel wylling and obedient subjectes.”

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His anatomy is composed to the end of advancing his chirurgery, and for the time in which it was written, is a very fair compendium. There are two figures whole length, cut in wood, but the references apply only to the exterior parts of the body and its regions. The conclusion of the work gives a good summary in relation to the temperaments. All his writings appear to be terminated by rhyming verses, and those attached to his anatomy are in praise of chirurgery, as founded upon a knowledge of anatomy, and condemnation of those who practise without learning.

Halle's antipathy to quacks was inveterate. Throughout his writings he omits no opportunity of expressing his horror of, and aversion to them; but in the following and concluding "Historiall Expostulation," he enters into particulars, gives many curious details of the practices of itinerant impostors, principally such as resided in, or visited Maidstone, in Kent, where it appears he exercised his profession. His "Goodlye Doctrine and Instruction" is drawn up in verse, and is marked by good sense, and in itself is a curious composition.

According to Watt and other authorities, Hall or Halle was also author of "The Court of Virtue, containing many Holy or Spretual Songs, Sonnettes, Psalmes, Ballets, and Shorte Sentences, as well as of Holy Scripture as others, with Music, Notes, London, 1565," 16mo.

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But an earlier production, (being in 1550), may be mentioned : “ Certayne Chapters taken out of the Proverbes of Solomon, with other Chapters of the Holy Scripture, and certayne Psalmes of David, translated into English Metre, by John Hall.” By the remainder of the title it appears that the proverbs had been, in a former impression, unfairly attributed to Thomas Sternhold.

A copy of verses by Halle, is prefixed to “ The Enchiridion of Surgery, by Thomas Gale, London, 1563, 12mo.” Halle and Gale seem to have enjoyed much intimacy, and to have had minds congenial to each other. Gale served in the army of Henry VIII, at Montreal, in 1544, and in that of King Philip, at St. Quintin, in 1557 ; he was serjeant-surgeon to Queen Elizabeth, and his picture of the state of military surgery in his time, appears to have been no better than the civil surgery as described by Halle. The following extract may not be uninteresting to the reader :—

“ I remember,” says he, “ when I was in the wars,” in the time of that most famous prince, King Henry VIII, there was a great rabblement there, that took upon them to be surgeons. Some were sow-gelders, and some horse-gelders, with tinkers and coblers. This noble sect did such great cures that they got themselves a perpetual name ; for, like as Thessalus’s sect were called Thessalians, so

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was this rabblement, for their notorious cures, called dog-leachers, for in two dressings they did commonly make their cures whole and sound for ever, so that they neither felt heat nor cold, nor no manner of pain after. But when the Duke of Norfolk, who was then general, understood how the people did die, and that of small wounds, he sent for me and certain other surgeons, commanding us to make search how these men came to their death, whether it were by the grevousness of their wounds, or by the lack of knowledge of the surgeons; and we, according to our commandment, made search through all the camp, and found many of the same good fellows, which took upon them the names of surgeons,—not only the names but the wages also. We asking of them whether they were surgeons, or no, they said they were; we demanded with whom they were brought up, and they with shameless faces would answer, either with one cunning man or another, who was dead. Then we demanded of them what chirurgery stuff they had to cure men withal, and they would show us a pot or a box, which they had in a budget, wherein was such trumpery as they did use to grease horses heels withal, and laid upon scabbed horses backs, with nerval, and such like. And other that were coblers and tinkers, they used shoe maker's wax, with the rust of old